

National Bank Open

Monday, August 7, 2023

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Milos Raonic

Press Conference



M. RAONIC/F. Tiafoe

6-7, 7-6, 6-3

MILOS RAONIC

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations on the win. I want to ask you first and foremost about that final point of the first set tie-break, which was one of the strangest things, I think, we've ever seen here. What did you think happened in that moment? What were you told happened in that moment? And have you had a chance to get up to speed with what, in fact, the rule is, I guess, at this point?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah. So I guess the part that's confusing is he did call it my point. And I think at one point he said whatever it was, 12-All or 13-All that it should have been. Then he went and changed his mind.

Then the discussion wasn't where he touched the net. Then the discussion became, logically, the ball can't bounce the way he hit that shot at that speed. It won't bounce twice before he touches the net; right? Because he's too close to the net. So the logic was that he must have touched it either before it bounced once but definitely before it bounced twice.

Then the change -- then the issue was the amount of times the whole conversation was changed. Then it was, okay, which part of the net he touched; right? The line was that if it's past the singles sticks during a singles match, it's considered as a permanent structure, not the net.

But I'm sure that if I hit a forehand that hit the top of that post on the doubles and it bounced across or it happened to me, they would count that as a let.

So I don't have faith that they were being completely honest, but it is what it is. I think they just handled it badly, whatever the rule would have been. I just didn't think it was handled.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on the win. I'm curious your thoughts on the third set. You saved six break points, four of them were aces. Just a lot of clutch serves at opportune moments.

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah. You know, I was struggling at that point. I got ahead, and I kind of checked out of most of the returns games. And I was quite aware that, you know, the game plan would be just to try to find a way to take care of my serve.

Obviously, the first one to get out was fortunate. I think I had a few double faults already in that game. Then the second one after the break, it was probably a combination with tightness. Because you kind of feel like, okay, even though I'm struggling a little bit physically, there's an opportunity here. You feel closer to it, and you don't necessarily want it to slip.

But all of those things went as well as they possibly could. And just kind of good play and good fortune kind of got me through.

Q. Especially after that weird end to the first set, how big a factor was the crowd in helping you keep your energy up and motivation up and turn the match around?

MILOS RAONIC: It makes a big difference. I think that kind of got everybody going. That, and that game that I got fortunate to break back at when he was serving for the first set.

You know, I'm not necessarily the best player involving the crowd. I just kind of keep my head down and I do my thing, and I think that got everybody riled up, everybody excited, everybody more into the match. And I think that just kind of gave me some momentum and some force going forward.

Q. Milos, tonight the Davis Cup team was honored. They got their rings. Obviously, you had a big role in getting this team to the world level through the match you played in South American and Israel over the years. So what did that moment kind of mean to you to see them celebrate such a big moment for Canadian



tennis?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I guess I have more of a connection to seeing them win it last year.

Obviously, I was so caught up in getting ready for mine, between nerves, and I didn't really get to see any of that ceremony.

But I think for me it was more so about last year. Once they won, you kind of realized the importance of it.

Obviously, getting the recognition here in front of -- especially since there's no home ties in these kind of things anymore, getting that -- seeing them get that recognition must have been something incredibly special.

But like I've said a few times now, that I think it's by far the biggest moment in Canadian tennis just because it represents a much longer heritage, a much longer lifespan than -- for example, you could compare it to Bianca winning the US Open.

I think it's much bigger just because there's been a lot of people involved in Davis Cup in Canada from the players, staff, volunteers, home ties, away ties, the fans that decide very enthusiastically to travel to all these places, bringing out these big cardboard cutouts. And that's only since I've been around. Who knows what they were doing if you go back '70s, '60s, '80s.

So I think all that comes together and it touches a lot more people. It's a much bigger effect, and I think it's an enormous achievement.

Q. Now you have that first one in the can, what do you think you're capable of this week?

MILOS RAONIC: I've just got to find a way to give myself the best chance to win next week -- not next week even. Next match. It doesn't really go much further than that.

I think it's a very short-term, short focus, and doing everything I can for that.

Q. After all you've been through the past two years being off the tour, all the hard work you had to put in to come back, getting back in shape and match ready, what does it mean to come back and have a victory like this over a top level opponent on home soil and with your parents in attendance?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I don't know which of those things is kind of the most meaningful to me.

The way I can put it is I've known through practice, I've been able to see the level I can play.

The thing I've always said is it doesn't matter how much you do the right things. You never know when things kind of click and come together for you. For me, it's incredibly special for it to be here.

That match goes a different way, I think it still would have been a positive stepping stone to the progress I'm making.

Obviously, I got so caught up in my own thing. But then when I saw my family's reaction in some videos after that, that was probably the most important. That embrace between my mom and dad, that's probably the thing that goes the furthest to me and means the most to me.

Yeah, those things, once you don't have it or they haven't been able to kind of come around and watch, that's when they start meaning a lot. You kind of take it for granted when everything is kind of going smooth.

Q. In your earlier response, you mentioned nerves and trying to handle your nerves before the match. At this point, do you still get nervous? Because you've never, ever shown it, I don't think.

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah. But nerves are a good thing. It keeps you sharp. It keeps you anxious. Makes you want to work through things, obviously.

You know, your first kind of thought process is, okay, I want to go out there and play a good match. I know I have a very difficult opponent. I don't know how many times I get to do this again. All these kind of things.

So you kind of feel, like, the clock kind of ticking against you, but then also that eagerness to be able to produce something to be proud of. Like, all those things kind of cross your mind.

And the beauty of it is once you start competing, I think that goes away pretty quickly and it becomes a focus on the immediate challenges and difficulties you're trying to get through point by point.

But yeah, there's a lot of things that make me nervous. I think it would be hard for me -- I think it's a good thing, because I don't think I would enjoy it if it didn't, because it just means that it means something to me.

Q. You were talking about the video that you saw of your parents embracing and what that meant to you. I'm just curious what sort of went through your head when you saw the video, and have you had a chance to

sort of talk to them about the experience yet tonight or not yet?

MILOS RAONIC: No. Yeah, I saw it. I just thought it was sweet. I'm just so caught up in getting ready for the next thing. I'm not very good at stopping and reminiscing.

I did see them. But, you know, Eastern European parents, not always the best at expressing emotions too much. So I'm sure there will be one moment when we talk about it. Today wasn't that day.

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